PRISM

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Prism

Rachael Cleverly

The Literary Magazine of Peace College

Peace College

Prism 1995

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Art Editor: Liza Nicholson

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Poetry Awards		Prose Awards
1st	Rachel Cleverly	Julia Lyons
2nd	Ellen Giard	
3rd	Renee Jarrett and Hunter Payne	

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from Homesickness

1. Where I Live

The first snow hits by mid-October.
Bright orange days of fire and warm wind
blot out slowly in a blur of white.

I walk outside
    a few wet leaves still cling to apple
branches
I stretch my arms
    houses line the streets, hushed sentinels
I raise my face to the slate gray sky
to the shavings of ice trembling down
    the air is still warm
and the flakes melt to tears on my cheeks.

It won't last;
Autumn must die by degrees.
The snow that swoops with gentle determination
folds into itself as it falls,
dissolves as it brushes the ground.

Where I live nothing succumbs
to the first blast.

2. Recurring Dream: Leaving Home

I set out early,
a staccato of light rain on the windshield.
Street lamps glow out of the morning fog
like blank faces on the edge of a crowd.
Familiar alleys retreat in shadow.
I drive main street slowly
past store fronts, deserted parks,
whole neighborhoods
half-concealed in mist that whips
and curls around the brick.
But houses give way to meadow,
each huddled figure farther than the last.
Clouds dissipate with nothing to cling to.
I turn to the highway,
straight and grey for miles.

Rachel Cleverly

Lightning Bugs

In the warm summer night air,
our bare feet tread upon cool
street pavement.

"How come it's hot outside,
but the street is cold?"
"Stupid!"
"I ain't!"

We look up at a smoky blue sky,
and see the man in the moon,
smiling down at us.

We wave,
"I saw the cow jump over the moon!"
"Yeah-sure!", and kicks a tuft of grass.

"I see a lightning bug!"
"I see more!"

Run!
Catch them!

Put them in jars with holes cut at the top,
you'll have your very
own
star!

"Naw! Catch them and pull their lights out"
"Ugh! Gross!"
"Naw, it ain't!"

Oh no!
"He got away!"
Catch him!

We trip,
fall,
roll
down a
hill.

We sit beneath the backyard light,
surrounded by buttercups,

"Rub one under your chin.
If your neck turns yellow,
means ya like butter!"
"Did Mama say so?"
"Yeah!"
"Ugh...I itch!"
"That's what happens when ya waller in the grass!"
Itch-
scratch-
itch-

A freshly lit grill,
mouths water,
stomachs growl.

Daddy's hamburgers and hotdogs!
Homemade ice-cream!
"Can I have some of the salt?"
"Is it done yet?"

We sit on the back porch steps,
the chocolate ice cream melts
as we make sure each mouthful lasts
and lasts...

The silver moon peeks at us
from behind the darkened pines,
and we wave good-bye to him for the night.

"See that star? That's a wishing star!"
"So?"
"I'm gonna make a wish!"

"What'd ya wish for?"
"Can't tell!"
"Silly!"

"No more lightning bugs."
"They'll be back tomorrow."

The evening,
still
quiet, (Shhh...)

Now lights all out,
the only sounds left
are Johnny Carson's evening talk,
kitty scratching to get out,
and Mama hollerin'
"time for bed, girls!"

Ellen Giard

One by One

Erika Sexton

Spinning on its axis,
Our magnetic mass
Orbits the sun,
Never missing a pulse,
Holding its creatures
Secure, not losing one.

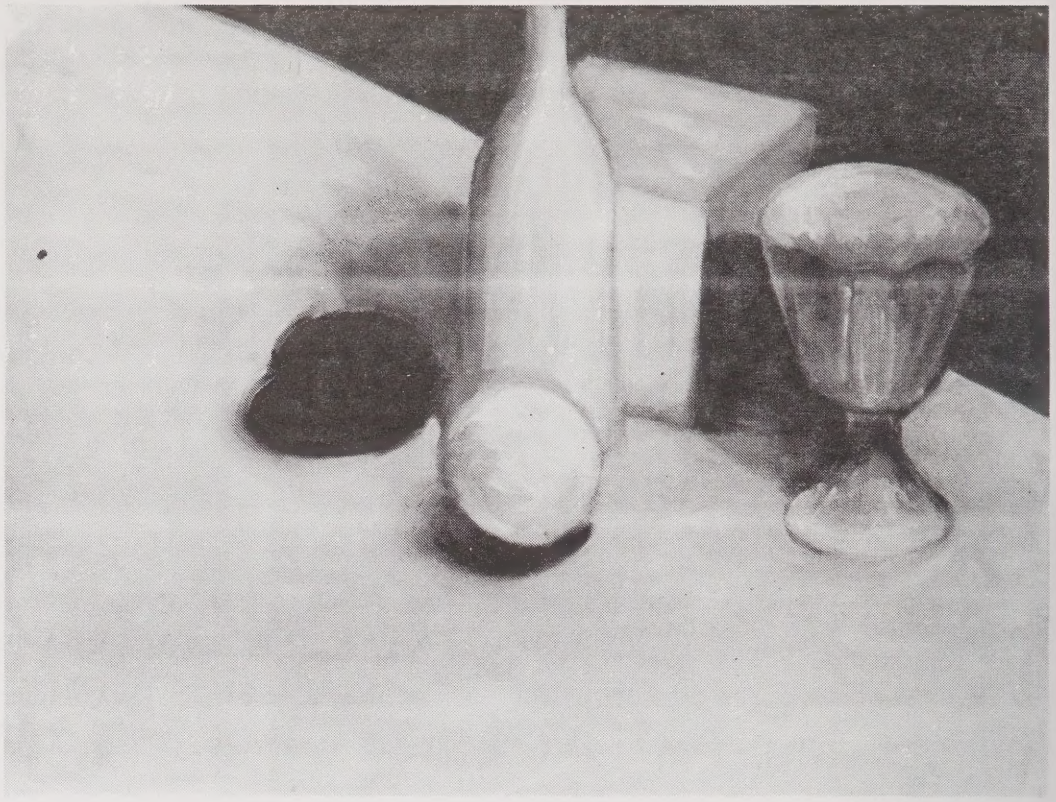
But here on earth
We turn and spin
In turmoil,
Flip and flop
Between living and dying.
Serbs and Bosnians,
Chechnyans and Russians,
Bloods and Crips
Wearingthecolors
To glorify
Their pride,
Carrying explosives
To show their toughness,
Losing priceless souls,
One by one
Breath by breath.

Renee Jarrett

Winter

Winter
the days
of drinking
homemade hot chocolate
and eating
the famous oven-baked bread
with sticky honey
and chewy peanut butter
toasted
and the brunswick stew
mom made
from scratch
hot
delicious
Right after sledding
down a steep hill
that takes forever to climb
but seconds to sled down
in the orange
plastic
sled
and building forts
on the road
because there
are no cars
trucks
or people
or noise
except their laughter
made by the children
And your dog escapes
the house
his prison
and flees outside
as the snow
sticks to his paws
like thorns
to a bush
And you love him
the fort
the hill
the children
the food
the fire
the playful dad
the caring mother
and winter.

Hunter Payne



Michelle Morris

Winter Afternoon

The breath of my horse
with every exhalation
is proof of the crisp new season.
He paws the frozen ground impatiently,
playfully tosses his head as I place the saddle
upon his back,
catching the sound of the howling wind.
He turns, looks at me in anticipation.
down the familiar trail we trot,
though somehow today the day seems
different.
Trees bare of their summer green leaves
make spooky monsters to him.
Brittle twigs snap beneath his hooves.
Bitter winds gust through our bodies.
I feel his nervous excitement,
free of the heavy summer heat and
alive with vibrant coolness.
It is all I can do to contain
my enlivened little bay
as we canter down the trail
towards home.

Jenna Allen

Green Harbor, Massachusetts

I love the sprinkling
of white crystals
over tall, strong
trees
and the smell of
cold
crisp
air
with smoked turkey
and hot
pumpkin pie
and ruby red
cranberry sauce
and sparkling
white grape juice
and delicious homemade
cinnamon rolls
and singing "Silent Night"
'round a warm fireplace
smelling toasted
marshmallows
and making angels
in fluffy white snow
and going inside to
steaming hot cocoa
topped with whipped cream
and the piney smell
of a beautiful
Christmas tree
glowing with
white lights
and the
frozen toes
and frozen nose
but most of all
just
sitting
and talking
and sharing
with family
at
Grandma's House.

Clarissa Dunckel

M Street, Georgetowne

I like the spooky, scary city best at Halloween.
Warm sticky pastries with sugar and apples
melt between my chattering teeth.
In crisp fall air we take a brisk stroll
over cracked sidewalks and watch city lights dance
on their somber cement faces.
I watch the lights turn red, green, yellow
casting a luminescent glow on the cars beneath.
Women eye the lonely windows of closed shops
as youth, savages in their costumes,
roam free in the chilly night.
a ghost-tail tickles my sleeve
as if it likes trick-or-treat, too.
The cheerful cold chases the swift wind
up my open jacket, sending shivers up my spine.
i feel the moist air I breathe melt
on my numb nose.
I hear a haunting waltz playing softly, as mist
dances gracefully through the dark shadows.
The city lights and sounds mesh as one
with complete indifference to all who pass.

Julia H. Lyons

The Mime

I love the underground. I enjoy walking along the sidewalks of the subway tunnels every day to the yellow station on King Street. I like glancing around the bleak steel caves noting the small things one usually sees on the subway floor like an old candy wrapper, a dusty penny, or maybe a wadded-up piece of paper. I am constantly looking for something to watch while I wait for the train.

I am not alone down there. A group of people sit next to me on an old creaky bench every morning. Even though I do not know their names, they are my closest friends. We converge on the same bench every morning at 6:10 a.m. to wait for the yellow train that leaves at 6:30. We all just sit there and stare. We bore our eyes into other people's eyes, trying to glance at their souls for our own amusement.

One day as our small group of soul searchers was watching an old man enter a train, I noticed a movement near the next gate. It was a young mime with a monkey. The pale color of the cement under his feet was strikingly different in comparison to his dark black clothing. His face was masked in a curtain of white powder. There were two large red lips painted into an artificial smile around his mouth. The mime's little hairy friend was not dressed as dramatically as his owner; he merely wore a small red top hat on his head.

Amidst the loud rambling of the trains he performed for his tiny audience. It was the usual act of a mime. He pretended to be in a box, he pulled himself up and down by an imaginary rope, and he finished the short act by juggling three sequined balls.

After the last ball had landed in his hand the onlookers applauded and tossed coins to the two friends. The monkey, quick to do his part, danced around, gathering the coins. He placed them under his top hat and climbed up the mime to find his resting place on the mime's shoulder. Then the two proceeded onto a waiting train and disappeared into a tunnel.

Shortly after, the train arrived and we left in silence. The mime only amused us for about five minutes, and then we were back to watching our prey. All in all, our small group was not impressed. The act was not very exciting, in fact he did not seem the type of person that anyone would classify as an excellent entertainer.

The next day at about the same time our group converged again on the bench. This time the mime and monkey were already there. The mime had already begun to act out the same dull routine he had done the day before. Yet after he put down the juggling balls he pulled out an old toy pistol. He impressed us with his abilities to swing and draw the pistol at his will just like a cowboy. Suddenly he pointed it to his head, made a funny face, and pulled the trigger. The pistol went off with a loud pop. He staggered downward. Our group immediately broke out into laughter and applause. We began to toss so many coins that it appeared to rain down around them. Quickly the monkey gathered the coins under his hat and took off running down a dark tunnel. Our group then boarded the train that pulled up but, I stayed behind to meet the mime. He suddenly did not seem dull to me. I slowly moved towards the lying mime, waiting for the moment when he would jump up and smile. I knew he was dead when I saw the blood on the cement.

I bent down, picked up his three sequined juggling balls and proceeded to juggle onto the waiting train.

Heather Medd

Colorful Acrobats

She walks briskly
through the mall
gaudy earrings
dangling from her ears,
like acrobats on a trapeze.
In one hand
she holds a diet Coke,
the other,
a hot cup of coffee,
decaffeinated and black.
While she reads a book at night,
I feel her hand
on my back,
and images of cotton,
clouds,
and soft
baby skin
run through my mind.
Her large
bony knuckles
slide across my back.
as she gently scratches
with newly polished nails.
Scents of Gain detergent,
Georgio perfume,
and homemade bread
follow her hand
and slowly sweep across my face.
Her green eyes sparkle
through oversized glasses
as she says,
"I love you,
Bertha May."
Smiles shower upon me
as the contagious laughter
fills the room.
And it's home.
And it's love.
and it's my mother.

Hunter Payne

Liza Nicholson

A Million Pieces

I feel like I'm falling into a million pieces.
Fate chips away at me.
My breath sounds HARD and HEAVY in my ear.
I am nailed d
o
w
n by this night.
It probes its way into me.
No–it does not ease its way.
My head swarms it swarms
swarms, and swarms.

It is futile to fight Just let it happen.
This is not me.
I see myself; there I am with a swollen smile on my face.
who is that?
It is in me now, d
e
e
p inside, where the
haziness m
e
l
t
s into darkness.
I do not enjoy these head games, but what does it matter?
It is incredible how I can be so many places at one
time.
I know I am

in every corner.

If I cry, that could be my end.
But what is after this, anyway?
I stay frozen....and my empty state is no competition.
Like I thought it would be!
I keep my mouth shut and my eyes turned any way but Up

I feel like I am f
a
l
l
i
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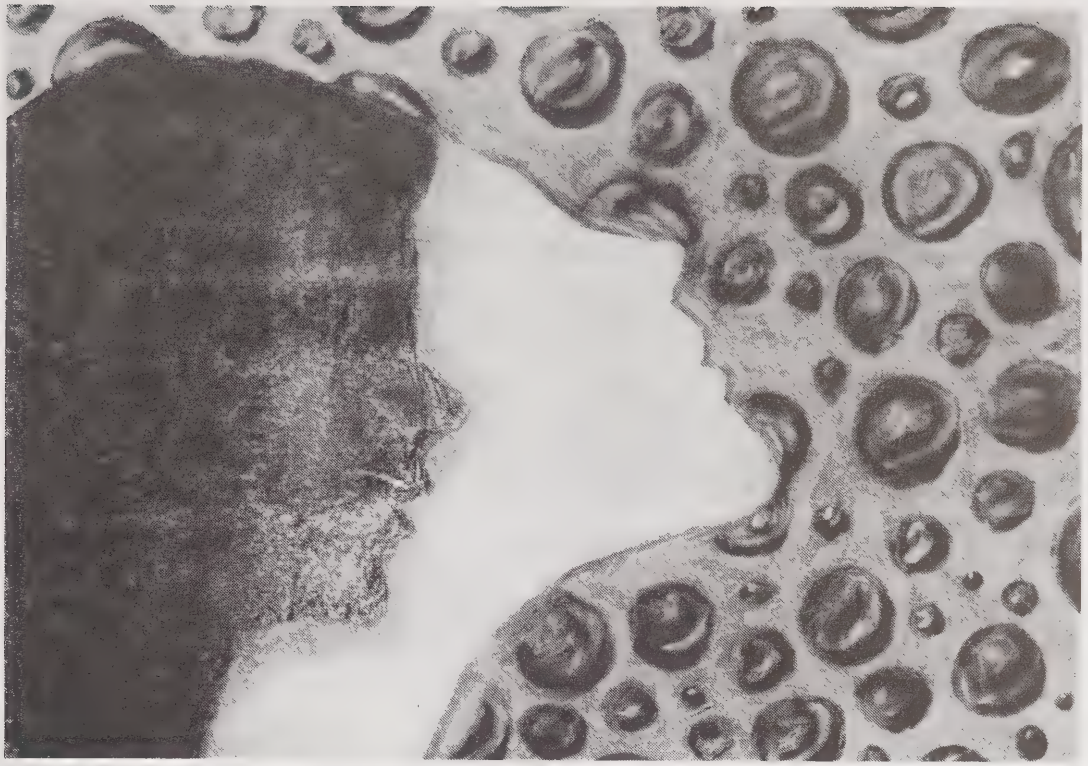
g into a
M
I I
L N pieces.

L O

Haley Hall



Change

Gretta Davis

I feel the energy in the air,
A thousand feet thumping against the ground in unison.
I can feel their triumph and failure (though miles away).
"Change!" they scream,
"Change!"
They, unlike us, know the feeling of losing freedom.
They (whoever their faces may be) know the horror of death
And the triumph of war.
They can feel feelings that, being American teenagers,
we have no concept of.
We cannot feel anything beyond ourselves,
and couldn't comprehend unison.
We watch TV "Oh look, there is another trend!"
(MTV shines bright in the eyes of masses)
Do you see the faces of their march?
Do you understand the chaos this world is in?
"Change" they scream.

We sit.

Miles away.
Days away.
Can you not feel their pain?
"Help."
Oh god, if only we were bright enough to understand
Revolution.

Erika Sexton

Mama's Story

My mama once told me a story,
About girls becoming ladies and boys becoming men,
Here in the South, men call upon women,
And I'm to be gentle and shy and allow them to choose me,
Me, in my frilly, floral frock and softly powdered face,
Mama said that's how life is in the South.

So I grew up here in the South,
Doing my best to live true to Mama's story,
I wore those dainty dresses and powdered my face,
And waited patiently to hear from the boys and men,
I'd complain to Mama, but she'd say this was best for me,
Because that's how life is here for women.

For Mama, I tried so hard to live like women.
Who lazily rock away hours on porch swings in the South,
But living this way wasn't for me,
I knew I'd never be a character in my Mama's story,
I tossed my security blanket and found the waiting men,
And threw away the powder that once covered my face.

I no longer prettied my face,
And was the talk of the town for local women,
I wore blue jeans and sweaters and was gazed upon by men.
No one knew what to think of a girl like me in the South,
I ran into the wind and away went Mama's story,
Doing what I wanted and needed for me.

I was walking on the road called *me*,
I forgot about the make-up that had prettied my face,
I wrote down lines and made up my own story,
Walking with my head high, proud to be a woman,
With a strong mind, not the weak mind of the south,
And instead of waiting, be waited on by men,

This vast world is no longer just for men,
The doors are open, waiting for other women and me,
Mama's story is my only keepsake of women in the South,
My nose is rarely powdered, a glow is on my face,
Nothing is too hard, too difficult for any woman,
And I think Mama cried when she heard my new story.

So this is my life in the South, and my uncovered face,
Knowing the right way for me, and being my own woman,
Soon men will say "Yes Ma'am" to me, but that's another story.

Ellen Giard

Ten O'Clock

Throwing the tired blue frock
Over my head,
I rush up the stairs
So as not to be late.
Strolling down the plush red carpet
Feeling like a queen,
I glance from side to side,
Looking for warm faces
Of freshly-made friends
To sit with.
Sitting, staring
beyond the golden cross
I watch
The celestial brass pipes
Reaching for heaven.
The organ begins
Playing soft music.
I am reassured;
Someone loves me.
As the ritual begins,
My tired face feels fresh.
As the tall stong man
Runs his garden-roughened
hands through
His white hair,
Stands to fill me
With good words,
His crisp black robe
Falls into place.
I listen attentively,
Moved by his robust voice.
I know
He loves me.

As time draws to an
End
And our tradition
Halts
We will forever
Be his
"Peace girls."

Renee Jarrett

Erin Horne

Erin Horne

Pain is the Catalyst

Pain is the catalyst
That forces sorrow's hand
To tell her story
With words unspoken–

Broken thoughts
Scattered across recorded pages
Of seemingly endless days.

Unavoidable change
Ripping life with talons of
Uncertainty.
She, frail and unable to cope,
Needing the valiant knight,
Finds only solitude.
Nowhere to turn–
Continue the tragedy.

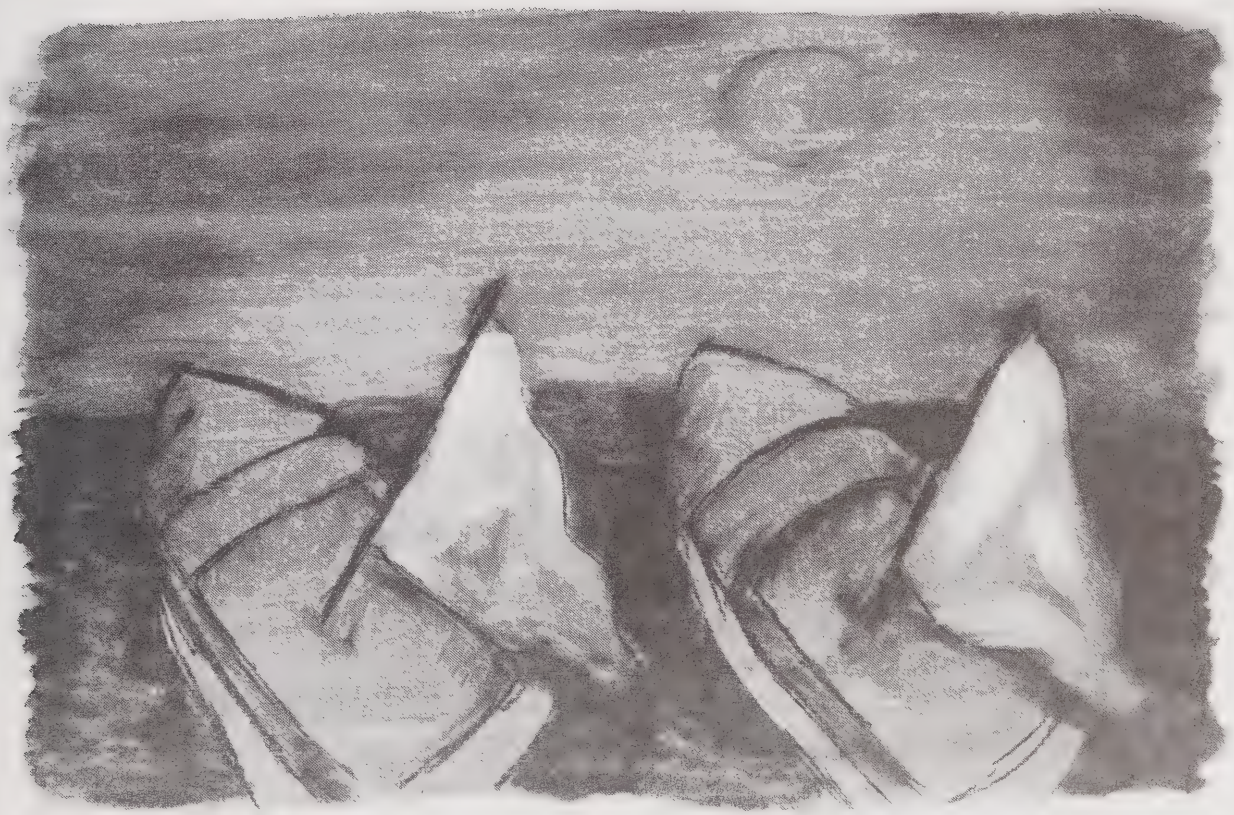
All the elements:
passion, lust, betrayal
she records with a tearful heart
which cries silently to
an absent audience.

Heather Barnes

The Dock

Two old lumbering boats
nestled at each other's side
like tired work horses
stabled beside one another
constant companions
in the serenity
of the vast Louisiana bayou
reminders of a simple time
docked silently
against the shore
blurred reflections
muddle already-darkened waters
sultry breeze
comforts their worn wooden sides
a solitary path
winds across the expanse.

Jenna Allen

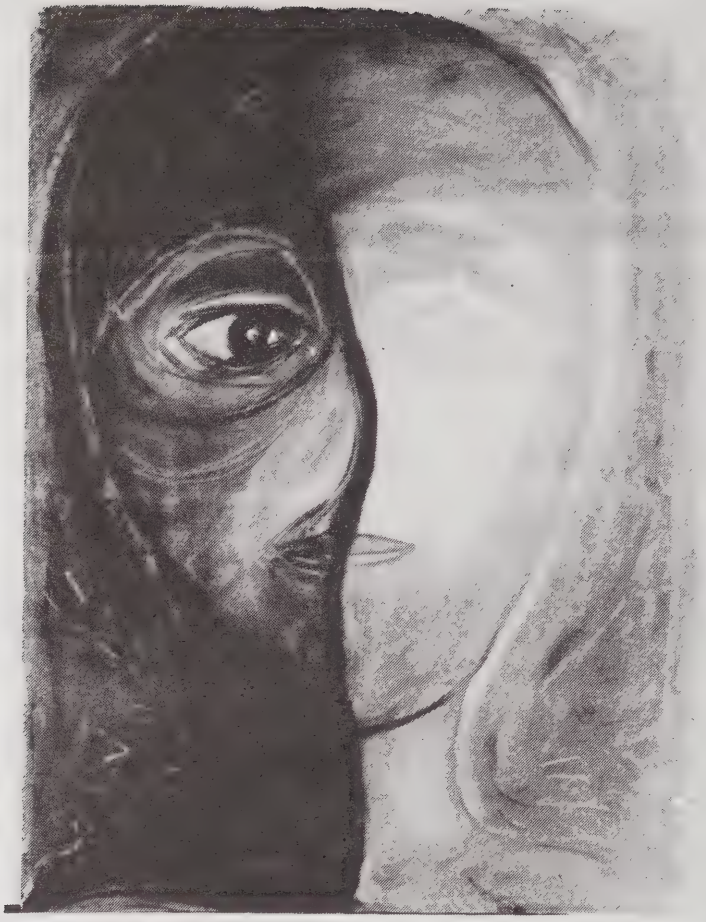


Greta Sutton

Feathers

deathly face
with the
feathers cascading
from his solemn
breath of nighttime
with cries
to the god of a statue
made by poor
deathly hands
and the music
of the sounds of
feathers
cascading from his tears.

Suzanne Page



Allison Hargrave

Some People Say

Some people say, "We must save the world,"
Then sit back and watch it die.
Some people say, "We must stop abuse";
They see bruises and wonder why.
Others say, "Food for the hungry,"
But give up none from their plate.
It is victims only, who, when they die
Will pass through Heaven's gate.

Megan Downing

Jamie Grubbs

Nature's Sanctuary

It is rude to open doors
    Of the church
And having the people look
  At us, the late comers.
So I sit in another sanctuary
      Without locks.
  The wind is pleasant
  While we sit in thought.
  The colors are heavenly:
  The greens and yellows–
  Even the gray of the stones
      Gives me strength.
I thought I would feel bad
    Skipping church
    Because I was late,
But I have found peace in this place
  Where the doors are always open.

Liza Nicholson

The Patient

Jamie Grubbs

Chills ran swiftly up my spine as I wrote the prescription. It was an unsettling if not frightening thought that there were such criminals loose in society. Loose, in that they had might as well have been loose, living in such a minimal security asylum. Unfortunately though, often these patients were set free after as little as six months of treatment, and it was usually futile to hope they could ever exist normally in society. But of course the system is always right; rehabilitation as apposed to punishment is the civilized method of dealing with our delinquents. Are they not victims too? It is the responsibility of doctors like myself to correct their neurological disorders. A half hour every few days with me in therapy sessions and all is well. During the time I had been practicing psychology, I always had tolerated and even believed in rehabilitation of the criminally insane; however, my beliefs were to be challenged by a single case.

The drugs, a temporary solution to control Jerry's psychotic episodes, regulated his unpredictable behavior. Jerry, patient #113, was an interesting case; I had never disagreed with that prognosis, but I neither like, working with him, nor foresaw any progress in his "treatment." He was, and I believed he would always be, a cold-blooded killer. Jerry had bludgeoned thirty women to death in a period of two years. Though I valued him as a case potentially valuable in my field of research, I always left our sessions together with a feeling of trepidation. He was different from all the others I had treated, and I had begun to see him through the eyes of a skeptical woman rather than an impartial doctor.

Jerry had been on death row, but had escaped execution by a last minute appeal. Instead of his receiving the just punishment he undoubtedly deserved–for I never once questioned the fact that he possessed a complete realization of his transgressions–I was forced to endure many uncomfortable sessions with him. Unfortunately for me, I had many sessions left, for the state had sentenced him to life in an institution. Appointment after appointment, we spent, never advancing nor succeeding in the therapy. Finally, I realized that instead of treating him as a mental patient with a distorted picture of reality, I could learn more by studying his thought processes and how they affected his behavior.

I knew there was evil lurking within the depths of Jerry's criminal mind. I had yet to completely understand, but I was beginning to realize that no quantity of drugs could reverse his violent behavior once it began. Thus, I concluded that nothing good could penetrate Jerry's mind. He was impervious to remorse concerning his crimes, which prevented me from recognizing any potential motive for them. It was after this realization that I first

toyed with the idea that the strange evil I sensed could be responsible for the terrible killings. I further supported this hypothesis by performing a series of experiments on Jerry. We monitored his brain, concentrating on the fluctuations of various chemicals as we administered different stimuli. Our team of psychologists was desperate to find some clue as to what transformed Jerry into a killing machine. At some times we began to notice levels of energy, which on other occasions were unaccounted for. Therefore, I concluded that they were caused by a chemical which only materialized in some situations. Even more intriguing, though, was that these occasions coincided with his episodes of aggressive behavior.

Another peculiar pattern was formulating in my own mind during the time I treated Jerry. I felt a force enveloping me slowly, but its presence was inevitably recognizable. I'd begun to concentrate on what was going on inside my thoughts, zeroing in on this force which I felt was altering my convictions concerning such criminals as Jerry. I had trained myself to tune into it, listen for it, and almost control it. It was beginning to change my feelings toward my cases, forcing me to question the validity of my work. I began to understand my changing objectives in various cases, especially Jerry's. As I wrote his prescription, I felt the force again, slipping into my mind as a cat slowly steps onto a feather pillow. I had the power, the ability to serve the justice that patients such as Jerry deserved, but society hadn't given. I could end their escape from the crimes they'd committed against my society- a society that I'd helped to fool. Could it be that I was no longer interested in the morbid games I played with Jerry in my endless research? These doubts occupied my anguished mind for two years before I allowed them to compel me to action.

I decided that to proceed any further with my research, I needed to monitor Jerry's sleep stages. I'd planned the first night of observation with two other doctors from the nearby university. However, they had called the preceding day and cancelled with regrets. I didn't find it necessary to postpone what I was sure would be an exciting breakthrough in criminal psychology. I would spend the night observing Jerry's sleep patterns alone; I had no reason to fear, because I'd always taken care to maintain the utmost precaution throughout my research due to the nature of my patients. I had no reason to question my safety during the upcoming experiment; however, when I entered the observation area beside Jerry's quarters, I felt anxiety I had never before experienced.

Aligning the wall were television monitors and other equipment I used to observe the levels of energy in Jerry's brain. This would all be recorded as he entered into a subconscious state. Jerry looked so calm and peaceful as he descended into the first sleep stage, the tranquility only broken by a few jerks or sleep spindles. Even these normal occurrences startled me, for I had not relaxed since I stepped into the room. Two hours passed, and my eyes had not left the monitors, which in turn, had cruelly refused me anything significant. About four o'clock in the morning I noticed a slight increase in the energy waves in Jerry's brain. The energy, slowly, but steadily increased until it reached the elevated levels I'd recognized in prior observations. His heartbeat significantly increased as well, until it was beating at an abnormally rapid pace. Jerry's muscles tensed, and his limbs became rigid. Suddenly, to my horror, his eyes opened wide, and he proceeded to blankly stare into the observation camera, directly at me. Startled, I fumbled quickly for the phone, and when I had calmed down enough to pick up the receiver, I rang the front office for a couple of security guards. When my eyes returned to the monitor, I saw that Jerry had somehow escaped from his restraints, ripped off the wires, and left the room. "That's impossible!" I yelled aloud. He had been locked inside the room–and now, he was gone. My eyes had to be playing tricks on me, for I was a rationally thinking professional, incapable of forgetting to lock a convicted psychopath up before I spent the night a room away! Nevertheless, I sealed the door to the room and waited for the security personnel to arrive.

Security was taking what seemed like hours to come, which only contributed to make my imagination run wild. Finally, I heard a knock on the door. "Ma'am, is everything all right?" The husky voice seemed more suitable for a grizzly bear. I was so relieved that the guard had arrived that I opened the door without even a glance at the hall monitor. To my horror, it was not the security guard, but Jerry waiting for me outside. I immediately attempted to slam the door shut, but Jerry's bear-like strength soon overpowered me. Adrenaline racing through my veins, awareness of my surroundings grew acute in an instant; I became a wolf ready to attack with lightning reflexes, I grabbed a nearby pen and with one swift stroke, plunged it into Jerry's widely opened eye. The blow penetrated easily, like a knife sliding through jello. To my surprise, he did not utter a single scream. With terror, I

bolted for the door, narrowly escaping Jerry's claws. I ran down the corridor, my lab coat flying behind me resembling the wings of a snowbird pursued by a predator. As I ran for my life, I felt the depth of my own mortality.

I made it to the front desk, only to find the mutilated corpses of my secretary and the security guards. My heart almost stopped as I racked my brains for anything which would rescue me from my predicament. My thoughts of despair were interrupted by waves of panic. I realized that one of us would have to die and I decided that it would be Jerry. Breaking into a glass fire extinguisher case, I quickly retrieved the heavy metal cylinder. Jerry's footsteps were audible now; I had no time to think. I concealed myself behind a door and waited for him to step into arm's length of my weapon. One moment later he did so, and I struck him with such force that he never had a chance to react. His skull depressed and gave way as a watermelon would if dropped on concrete. He collapsed with a dull thud on the lobby floor, leaving a dark puddle of blood with a halo of brain matter and splinters of skull. Exhausted, but overcome with relief, my knees buckled, and I fell into the arms of a nearby chair.

Later I thought of the ironic justice of Jerry's death; I had killed him as he killed those thirty women. I was suddenly overcome with a great feeling of satisfaction, in that I esteemed my victory as a victory for society. Jerry's victims were avenged; justice was served. It occurred to me that this was the plan of "treatment" I subconsciously had had in mind for Jerry all along. The force which slowly enveloped my mind had climaxed with Jerry's death. Now, five years later, I still regard the experience as the only "cure" for Jerry's illness–and my own.

Julia Lyons

Erika Sexton

Rain,

Rain,

Go Away

Jack sat against the pane of the window seat. He rubbed his finger across the sill, catching the loose dirt. After examining his gritty finger, he wiped his finger on his faded blue jeans.

Rain splashed on the window, branching across the smudged glass. Thunder boomed, and lightning darted across the sooty, swollen clouds. Mud gathered at the foot of the cracked door stoop, oozing sideways towards the yellow budded bushes.

Jack glanced outside again. His baseball bat and candy-apple red bike lay in the yard. He suddenly remembered he had a game today, slamming his fist in the seat cushion that left crushed hand imprints. He couldn't believe today of all days–the day he was supposed to play in the little league championship–it had to rain. It just had to rain, just when he proved to the coach his ability to throw a curved ball. All pumped up for nothing, he thought. Instead of having the time of his life, he was sitting on the window seat seeing how much dust he could collect on one finger.

Jack wiped his finger across his jeans one last time and began to unmusically tap the wall. He grew bored with that, so he started to count the intricate roses on the shimmering wallpaper. One, two, three, four–By the sixtieth rose, he lost his patience.

Jack rolled off the seat and crawled to the TV. For some other form of entertainment on a Saturday afternoon–western, western, western, cooking show with a flour-caked, middle-aged man, football game, western–didn't these people who ran the stations think to show cartoons all day? Stretching out on the shaggy carpet, Jack bent his legs upright and stared at the ceiling. His imagination led him to his wiping sweat off his brow with his pin-striped shirttail. After glancing at all the loaded bases with anxious players, Jack positioned his body sideways, wound his left arm, and yanked the ball out of his fist with all his might. Before the ball reached the plate, Jack stopped the dream. It'd do him no good to think about what he could be doing if the rain hadn't messed up his plans.

Finally exasperated out of mind, he screamed, "Rain , rain, go away! Come again another day!"

Jack stamped his sneakered feet around the coffee table, creating his own rain dance. He pranced towards the sofa, and then towards the recliner, turning his body and waving his arms in the air every which way.

His mom propped her head in the door and took a look at her son, shaking her head. She hadn't the heart to tell him that the rain had just stopped. Jack seemed like he was having so much fun.

Ginny Smith

Sometimes

The hum of a numbness engulfs me,
growing louder, still, all the time,
encumbered today
on the sullied highway
where I cower behind the rhyme.

The old part of coldness engraves me,
growing mold and decay in the dust,
blooming sorrow and pain
from the cold, languid rain
brought on by the death of my trust.

The hark in the darkness invades me,
superstitiously there to confuse;
there's a world to regain
in this heartache and pain
and the games they attempt to amuse.

But sometimes the times are more pleasant,
when my face melts into a smile,
where horizon meets sky
and reflects in my eye
I am warm and content for a while.

Sunlight pours down like sweet lemonade,
in soft velvet ribbons of gold,
the youth in my face
on rare moments when I feel somewhat bold.

And I am warm in the light of emotions,
where the world becomes much more real,
I lift my head to rejoice
the song of my voice
in a beauty that I can now feel.

Ann Currier

Ocean Rescue

I've always thought of the beach as a refuge, but a sequence of events changed my perspective. Learning to fear and respect the ocean is an essential attitude when one lives at the beach. Without this attitude, one becomes too cocky and feels his or her power is greater than that of the wondrous sea.

I vividly remember one July afternoon two years ago. It was a beautiful day, and the weather was typical for the day right after a rigorous storm. Tropical Storm Bert had been brewing in the gulf thousands of miles away, and as a result of Bert's power, the undertow and rip tides caused red flags to be posted across the east coast. Local radio stations echoed the "No Swimming" command issued by the coast guard.

That particular afternoon, I chose to take my eight- year-old brother to one of the beach accesses on the Outer Banks; even though my brother is nine years younger than me, I felt reasonably sure he would obey me, and threats made by my mother assured me he would do as I said. I packed our four door, white Dodge Spirit with two blue striped beach chairs, a bag of towels, and small cooler filled with Sprites in the trunk. At the last minute, our next-door neighbor, Jill, decided to accompany us. David, Jill, and I headed to the waterfront expecting to enjoy the sun and sand.

I decided to park at the private access located on Hickory Street. After carrying our luggage across the dunes, we found a vacant spot and unloaded. David soon became restless and wanted to get in the water. He is a very ambitious little boy, and began surfing at the age of five. After much resistance, I decided to let him get his feet wet and play in the foamy surf, but watched him with extreme care, and even refrained from talking to Jill. Before long, David was tired, and I was relieved that he was out of the shore break. Not long after that he asked to take a walk, and with a stern warning to not even get his feet wet, I told him he was free to go.

Not long after David left, I feel asleep in my chair, and when I awoke two hours later, he still had not returned! I looked for Jill, and caught sight of her teal blue suit, and short, bobbed, brown hair; she was talking to one of her friends, but once she saw I was awake she came over to where I sat.

"Have you seen David? Has he passed back this way? Is he playing with friends?" I asked.

"No." She responded. I immediately got a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. Jill and I began walking in the direction we had last seen David, scanning crowds and looking everywhere, but seeing no sign of David. Hearing the screams and yells of children caught my attention, but David was not with them. I started to panic, and knew that if something had happened to him everyone would blame me! Knowing that I would have to live with the fact that if my brother was missing or dead because of my thoughtlessness, upset me terribly. Tears ran down my face as my eyes skimmed the water surface, and I became determined to find my brother.

Jill and I began to randomly ask people if they had seen a young boy walking by himself, but no one had. We turned to head back and see if maybe David had lost track of where we were. My heart sank when we returned and still he was not there. I knew I had to go home and tell my mother; Jill agreed to stay behind in case David came back.

My mother was extremely upset when I told her what had happened.

"What do you mean you can't find him?" She yelled. "How could you have lost him?"

In between questions I asked my sister, Sarah to stand by the phone and wait for news. Mom and I got in the car and raced back to the beach. She interrogated me the whole way back, and I answered each question the best I could. I let Mom off at the beach and I headed away to find a lifeguard.

Running up the street to the Hillcrest private access, I scooted past all the tourists. Out of breath , I approached the large towering lifeguard chair. Looking up and shielding my eyes from the sun, I blurted out, "I really need your help! We live in Southern Shores, and my brother has been missing for over three hours! He went for a walk and has not come back. He knows the area well, but we are all worried sick about him!"

Scott, the lifeguard, took down a description, " He has blue eyes, white blond hair, was wearing blue and black trunks, and weighs about 60 pounds." Scott jotted the information down and called it into the Dare County police by his CB radio and told them of the missing child. He then called the head of the Ocean Rescue Department. In the meantime, my mother was slowly making her way up the beach, and I could faintly see her purple shirt. Scott asked if it was possible for David to have gotten lost and found a ride home. But no, we had taught David to not take rides from people he did not know. The whole time we spent waiting, horrible scenes flashed through my mind, scenes of David being kidnapped, or having been pulled in and taken away by the current. My world began to crumble as I stood by Scott, shaking and crying.

My mothers short build and dark hair became more visible, and she arrived just at the time that Dave, the chief lifeguard arrived. I was chosen to ride in the big yellow truck, and scanned the crowded beach with binoculars while the loud siren screamed and the red lights flashed. We continued to search the beach for more than an hour, and by this time, I knew it was unlikely we would find David. Dave and I continued driving north to the town of Duck, where the waves were over eight feet tall. Their power was evident from the sea spray that erupted into the air after each wave crashed on to the eroding shore. The rip currents were easy to spot, and the swirling tide with its choppy motion gave me an eerie feeling. Paying close attention to the waters edge, I almost missed the message coming over the CB. Static interfered, and blurring the news. The second time around, the information was concise, and clearly stated the subject had been found! I was so excited I squealed loudly, and Dave, looking relieved, said he knew everything would work out.

Once back at Hillcrest, I jumped out of the emergency vehicle, and for the second time that day, ran up the sidewalk toward the commotion located to the left of the stairs. Hoping my brother was the center of attention, I made my way through the crowd and came face to face with him. I quickly put my arms around him, and told him how scared I was.

"What happened? Where were you?" I asked. David told us he had walked up to the Kitty Hawk pier, five miles up the beach. I asked the one question I knew everyone was thinking: "Why did you do this , David?"

"I just wanted to see if I could do it. Besides, Hannah, I had some things to think about." His response prompted a chorus of laughter from the surrounding crowd. "By the way," he added, "I never once put my feet in the water." Looking around me, I had to laugh. The whole scenario reminded me of an episode of "Baywatch", and no matter how hard the producers had tried, they could not have come up with a better ending.

At home, I reflected on how important my family was to me, and I knew that without them, there would be a void in my life. That night, I said a prayer and thanked God for the hedge of protection he had placed around my brother.

Hannah Whitfield

Fall Leaves

The den was dark with only the sunlight coming in. In the kitchen were sounds of pots and pans banging around. Dad was doing housework that he had put off for months. My brothers and sister, ranging in ages nine through fourteen, were watching television downstairs. There I sat in the den with my father's father, Pops. Only seven at the time, I was showing Pops my stamp collection.

It was Thanksgiving morning. Smells of turkey and homemade bread came rushing through the den as Pops arose and walked to the bar. Every time he spoke, the scent of alcohol poured over the room, and I had never remembered differently. As he walked to the bar, he struggled with his limp. He had one wooden leg that always slowed him down.

As he made his way back to the couch, I noticed how lonely he seemed. I probably had said more to him in that one morning then I ever had in my whole life. He had always kept to himself and I had almost been too frightened to speak, but this morning was different. I had found something to speak about, something we shared in common. Now we had a new relationship filled with uncertain emotions. I tried extra hard to "fit-in" with Pops so I could prove to everyone that he was a nice man and a good grandfather, but I had to know him before I could speak for him.

On the day before Pops' arrival, the house had been an emotional wreck. My mother had been complaining about Pops' visit whenever Dad left the room and as soon as Pops entered our house, she ran to the kitchen and stayed busy until he left. My dad never spoke much about Pops, but as soon as Pops came in, Dad changed to a new man. He would just stay in a bad humor - the kind of mood where it was just better not to speak to him - until Pops left. He spoke more to Pops than Mom did, but Dad kept himself occupied as well.

As I spoke to Pops about a stamp, I saw him staring out the window behind us. Looking outside to our backyard, I saw Father raking leaves. I had never seen my father rake leaves before, especially on a holiday. Without even saying a word, Pops got up and went to the back porch, where he called for my dad. He spoke to Dad for all of one minute, and without waiting for a response from Dad, turned around, left the porch, and sitting beside me on the couch, began to ask questions about a stamp. Dad got a troubled look on his face, went to the stairway, and called for my brothers.

At the time I did not know what Pops had said, but I later found out that Pops had told Dad if he had any control over his children, they would be outside raking instead of Father. Taking that as a command, Dad followed his orders and told my brothers to rake the back yard. Immediately they began to yell, and the matter was soon taken to my mom. As they complained to Mom about Dad's wishes, my mother's face began to grow a deep red color. Her eyes got a look of anger and hatred as she began to vigorously wash the flour from her hands. She asked no questions; she already knew the answers. Mom approached the couch where Pops and I were sitting and started questioning Pops. Soon the questions, as well as the answers, turned to yells. I remember looking at the old lonely man and feeling sorry for him, wondering why Mom was being so mean.

He rushed to his room and we all followed, both a little amazed and lost. Pops began to pack his bags, but for one moment he stopped and looked at Dad, who seemed so old and tired at the time. I began drawn to Pops's eyes as he stared at Dad, and his entire body, everything except for his own lips, began to yell, "Can't you control her?"

Soon my mom and Pops were outside; she was escorting him to his car. All of us children looked out the

window with amazement and confusion -- well, at least the youngest child did. My father was nowhere in the picture. I then noticed the yelling outside stopped, and I saw my mom lean towards Pops. Her words were almost a whisper, but I could still read her lips. "Go ahead. Show your grandchildren what kind of coward you really are. Let them see the true you."

My mother then turned towards the house, went back to the kitchen and continued cooking as if nothing had happened. Pops followed her, went straight to the bar, set his bags down, and reached for a new glass. As he poured himself another drink, I quietly grabbed my stamps and left the room. I thought to myself that he might actually like being alone, so I joined everyone downstairs.

Thanksgiving dinner that night was as perfect as the ones in the past. I know my mom would have preferred one less chair that year, but she never let it show. The day was Thanksgiving, a time for families to be together, and I am sure strangers passing would have seen us as the perfect Hallmark card painting. Two days later, when all the guests had left, Mom and Dad decided the whole family should rake the leaves together. I found it odd that she did not call the normal man who always raked our leaves every year, but I did not question her. Instead, I went outside and joined the family. My brothers had this system of raking the leaves into a pile, raking the pile onto a huge blue blanket, and dumping the leaves out of the blue blanket into an even bigger leaf pile in the woods. Afterwards, I would take a leap into the colorful pool of frail leaves. My mom came tumbling in beside me after Dad pushed her in. As we both laughed and giggled, I took a closer look at the leaves. It is amazing how gorgeous the leaves look from a distance, but when you take a closer look, their beauty slips away, and they are not so pretty any more.

Hunter Payne

The 1995 ***Prism*** *is dedicated in loving memory of Richard Rottschaeffer.*
Even though he is gone, his spirit and memory will always be with us at Peace.